

Joint CT Education Committee

Support: SB 948, SB 949, & SB 886

Equitable education funding for all public school students, including schools of choice

March 3, 2021

Greetings Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and Members of the Education Committee,

Good morning, my name is Tanesha Forman and I am a Dean at Elm City College Prep Middle School, a public charter school in New Haven, Connecticut. I am speaking today to ask you to ask you to pass an education funding bill during this legislative session that funds all our children equitably based on their needs and as individuals, not based on the type of public school they attend!

It is insufficient to only tell your children that racism and racists are bad. It is insufficient to simply explain "We love people of all colors." It is lazy and near damaging to proclaim a love for all people but never make the leap of actually reaching out to people of color or adding tangible diversity to your life. In a world filled with empty rhetoric, our children don't need to hear words from us without action. They need to see us embody the beliefs we claim to hold dear." These words by Bellamy Shoffner speak to the heart of why I'm unequivocally supportive of my school community.

I remember approaching our principal about the need for more robust programming around issues around race, class, privilege, and equity. As a teacher I was processing the fact that not enough of our senior leaders and school principals were Black and Latinx, and that didn't match our school community. I was sincerely curious about what we were doing to address how our collective biases, power, and systems could be impacting our decisions with students. It was not surprising that my principal invited me to present these ideas to the staff. This is the school community I serve. We know we're not perfect. Similar to the ideology of former First Lady Michelle Obama, we are "becoming." I can attest that each time we have fallen short, it has made our school community stand taller and stronger. We have and continue to take direct action to uphold the promises we've made to our students. We're having Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sessions on a regular basis. We're evaluating our policies and practices to ensure they are rooted in anti-racist thinking. We're working hard every day to convey that every student belongs in our school. We're learning, and we are not afraid to say we must urgently do better for our students and community. And today, I call on you to also urgently do better too. We must change the separate and extremely unequal public education funding system, one that continues to leave our 11,000 mostly low-income, Black and brown kids severely underfunded.

Please support us in this important work of leading for racial equity while providing a high quality education for our students by passing SB 948, SB 949 and SB 886. These bills fund all our

children equitably based on their needs and as individuals, not based on the type of public school they attend! Thank you for your time.

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